

Thursday, March 24, 2011

Columbus, GA – Representative Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02) toured the Pratt & Whitney Columbus Engine Center yesterday to get a first hand account of the plant's operation, and how it impacts the Columbus economy. Pratt & Whitney recently announced that as part of the expanding operations at the plant, they will add more than 180 high-paying jobs in Columbus.

"Creating jobs is a crucial part of our economic recovery, and while we still have a ways to go, it is important that we continue to create the conditions for growth and development in our community," said Rep. Bishop. "The expansion at Pratt & Whitney will bring high-paying jobs to Columbus and help boost our local economy. I was very excited by what I saw on my tour, and I am committed to doing whatever I can to help the plant continue to expand."

While touring the plant, Rep. Bishop received an update on the status of the expansion and met employees working at the facility. Pratt & Whitney has more than 2000 employees in Georgia at six major facilities. Nearly 1,000 employees work at the Columbus Engine Center, which has been in operation for more than 25 years and is spread out over 340 acres in Columbus.

The planned expansion will create more than 180 jobs at the facility to overhaul military aircraft engines. The expansion includes a refit of the current facility, additional tooling, new equipment and an upgrade to the facility's test cell to accommodate Pratt & Whitney's F117 engine.

Last month, Rep. Sanford Bishop fought for and supported an amendment to a House Continuing Resolution that eliminated funding for an additional engine for the Joint Strike Fighter. Had the amendment failed Pratt & Whitney may have been forced to cancel the planned expansion in Columbus. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has repeatedly called on Congress to cancel the additional funding for a second engine because "the military does not need it."

"Our nation's first, second, and third priority must be job creation," said Rep. Bishop. "As we look to reduce our budget deficit, we should focus on the projects that create jobs in a smart and efficient way. I look forward to working with Pratt & Whitney as the plant expands, and I am

committed to finding new opportunities to invest in Columbus and grow our economy."